

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 OFA-01 EB-07 SAJ-01 COME-00 INT-05 CEQ-01

EPA-01 PM-04 L-03 NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 TRSE-00 DLOS-04 SAL-01 AGR-05 SS-15 H-02

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8888

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK IMMEDIATE

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

SECDEF IMMEDIATE

CINCLANT IMMEDIATE

CINCUSNAVEUR

USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 02145

E.O. 11652: XEDS-1

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TAGS: EFIS, NATO. MARR, IC. UK

SUBJECT: ICELAND-UK FISHERIES DISPUTE

REF: (A) REYKJAVIK 193 (B) LONDON 1805

1. AT TIME WHEN ICELAND-UK FISHERIES DISPUTE PROCEEDS ON ITS DOWNWARD SPIRAL. AS ICELANDIC PRIME MINISTER PLEADS FOR U.S. TO EXERT PRESSURE ON UK TO WITHDRAW FRIGATES (REFTEL A.), AND WHILE HMG PREPARES FOR SECRETARY GENERAL LUNS' VISIT TOMORROW FEBRUARY 11. IT MAY BE UUSEFUUL TO WASHINGTON AND OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR EMBASSY TO RE-EMPHASIZE HOW WE BELIEVE BRITISH SEE PRESENT SITUATION.

2. AT THIS POINT. HMG IS PRINCIPALLY LOOKING FOR FACE-SAVING WAY OUT OF CURRENT IMPASSE WHICH CAN BE REASORABLY DEFENDED BEFORE THE UK FISHING INDUSTRY. SUCH A SOLUTION. HOWEVER. WOULD REQUIRE AT LEAST SOME SIGN OF ICELANDIC FLEXIBILITY. WE DOUBT THAT BRITISH GOVERNMENT. ESPECIALLY GIVEN JIM CALLAGHAN'S PRIDE. WOULD ACCET TOTAL AND OUBLIC UK HUMILIATION AT HANDS OF GOI. OUR GUESS IS THAT ALTHOUGH HMG IS ACU TELY AWARE OF WIDER IMPLICATIONS OF DISPUTE. IT WILL NOT UNCONDITIONALLY SURRENDER ITS PERCEIVED INTERESTS SOLELY TO SAVE ICELAND'S MEMBERSHIP IN NATO OR KEFLAVIK.

3. IF THIS IS TRUE, BRITISH WILL BE KEENLY SENSITIVE TO ANY INCREASED PRESSURE FROM LUNS, ALLIANCE OR U.S. TO MAKE FURTHER UNREQUITED NODS IN ICELAND'S DIRECTION. THUS FAR. BOTH U.S. AND NATO HAVE IMPARTED TO UK THEIR SERIOUS CONCEPN OVER EFFECTS ON ALLIANCE SOLIDARITY AND SECURITY OF PROGRESSIVE DETERIORATION OF SITUATION WITHOUT AT THE SAME TIME GIVING IMPRESSION OF OBVIOUS TILT TOWARD ICELAND. AS CALLAGHAN MADE CLEAR TO NATO CHIEFS OF MISSION FEBRUARY 4 (REFTEL B), BRITISH BELIEVE THEY HAVE DONE EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO AVOID A BREAK IR RELATIONS AND THE PROBABLE ATTENDANT CONSEQUENCES FOR NATO AND THE IDF. IN THIS REGARD. WE WERE INFORMED BY FCO TODAY TTAT GOI HAS NOT PURSUED HALLGRIMSSON'S IDEA OF LIMITED AGPEEMENT, NOT RESPONDED OFFICIALLY TO ANY OF THE RECENT UK PROPOSALS. NOR MADE ANY COUNTER PROPOSALS OF ITS OWN. THIS BEING THE CASE, THE BRITISH -- WHO
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WONDER ALOUD WHETHER POLITICAL SITUATION IN ICELAND WILL ALLOW HALLGRIMSSON TO STRIKE ANY DEAL -- ARE PRIVATELY PESSIMISTIC AND THINK IT UNLIKELY THAT LUNS' MEDIATING EFFORTS WILL ORODUCE ANY POSITIVE RESULTS. NONETHELESS, THEY WILL COOPERATE FULLY WITH THE LUNS' MISSION, HOPING THAT -- AS IN 1973 -- THE SECRETARY GENERAL WILL SOMEHOW FIND AR ACCEPTABLE EXIT FOR THE PARTIES FROM AN APPARENT CUL-DE-SAC.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FISHERIES, NEGOTIATIONS, FISHING DISPUTES, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LONDON02145
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760050-0836
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760264/aaaaceik.tel
Line Count: 117
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 REYKJAVIK 193, 76 LONDON 1805
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 MAR 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <02 AUG 2004 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ICELAND-UK FISHERIES DISPUTE
TAGS: EFIS, MARR, IC, UK, NATO, (LUNS, JOSEPH M A H)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006